

REVIEW OF USOR TRAVEL COSTS

SOCIAL SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
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ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

This issue brief reviews travel costs for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) from FY 2007 through FY 2014 with projections through FY 2016. The Division of Rehabilitation Services spends the most (\$143,700) of all the divisions for in state travel in FY 2014. The Division of Rehabilitation Services in state travel costs make up 67% of all USOR costs in this area. The Executive Director spends the most (\$39,100) of all the divisions for out of state travel in FY 2014. The Executive Director out of state travel costs make up 45% of all USOR costs in this area. When calculating the cost per overall staff, the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing has the highest in-state travel per FTE (\$1,121). The Executive Director has the highest out of state travel per FTE (\$1,844). The next closest divisions are the Executive Director with in state travel per FTE at \$906 and the Division of Blind and Visually Impaired out of state travel per FTE at \$178. This brief is for informational purposes only and requires no legislative action.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Total Fund Spent for In State Travel per FTE

The table and chart below indicate that the Executive Director had the highest spending for in state travel per FTE among the divisions in the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation for FY 2014 followed by the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation indicates this is because:

The Executive Director's budget includes several staff members that have statewide responsibilities and who are required to travel often to perform their job duties. These include the Executive Director, agency trainers who travel to train throughout the state, a facility manager who does facility management for all of USOR, and Information Technology staff who install and maintain computer equipment in all USOR offices throughout the state

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation In State Travel Per FTE										
Division	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15 Est	16 Est
Executive Director	\$ 1,907	\$ 2,120	\$ 1,481	\$ 694	\$ 1,156	\$ 1,147	\$ 1,329	\$ 906	\$ 686	\$ 686
Blind and Visually Impaired	\$ 385	\$ 363	\$ 188	\$ 178	\$ 163	\$ 294	\$ 350	\$ 259	\$ 247	\$ 247
Rehabilitation Services	\$ 749	\$ 830	\$ 521	\$ 312	\$ 471	\$ 598	\$ 688	\$ 541	\$ 535	\$ 535
Disability Determination	\$ 16	\$ 18	\$ 17	\$ 5	\$ 14	\$ 28	\$ 17	\$ 10	\$ 9	\$ 9
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	\$ 397	\$ 660	\$ 545	\$ 496	\$ 500	\$ 689	\$ 679	\$ 1,121	\$ 880	\$ 880

Table 1

The table above shows a general trend for all divisions for the cost per FTE for in state travel to come down from the two years of FY 2007 and FY 2008 (before the *Great Recession*) and then gradually rise again to levels below what they were before the *Great Recession*. However, the one exception is the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) which has almost doubled its in state travel cost per FTE by FY 2014. This division indicates this is because:

The DSDHH has made a concerted effort, with the support of the Utah State legislature, to increase outreach activities and services to individuals in rural communities.

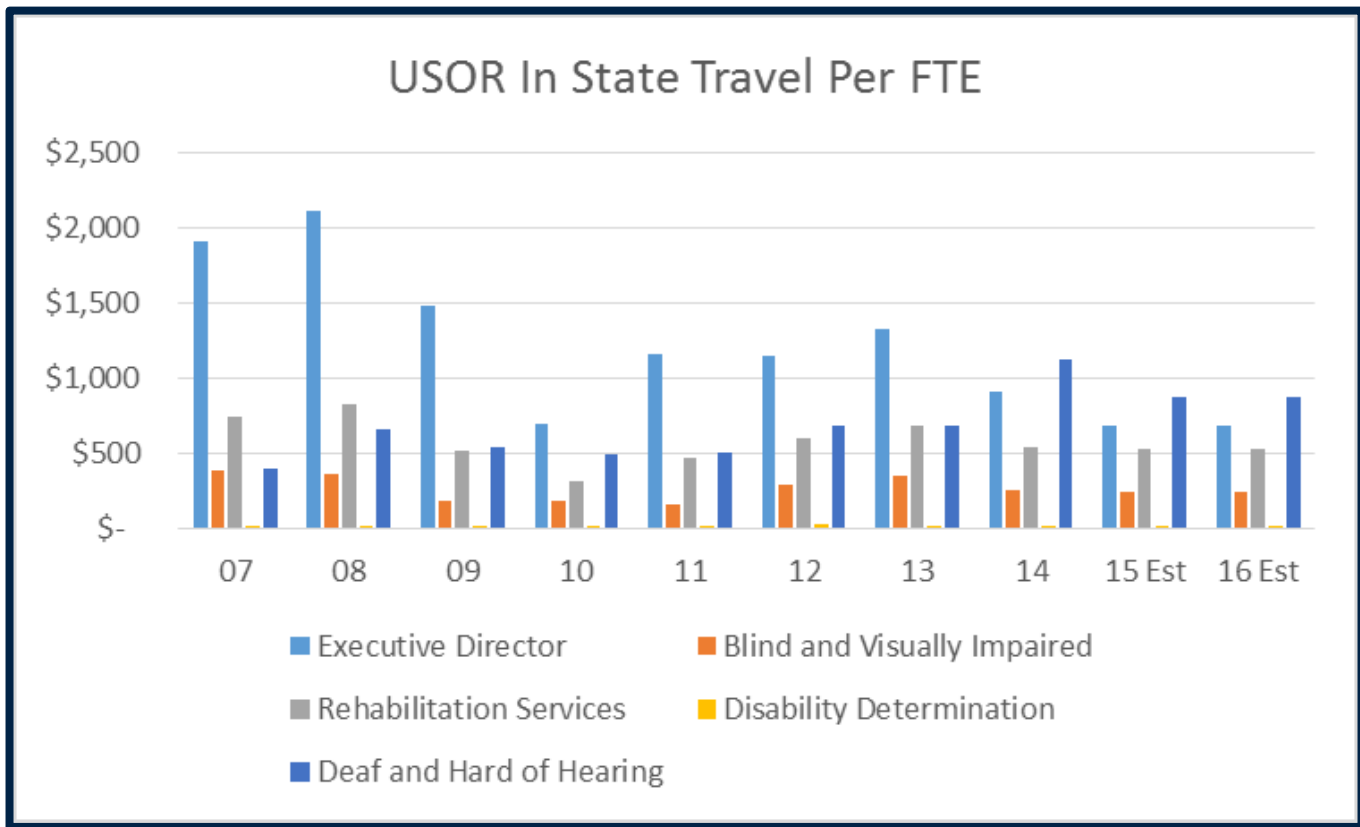


Chart 1

Total Fund Spent for Out of State Travel per FTE

The table and chart below indicate that the Executive Director had the highest spending for out of state travel per FTE among the divisions in the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation for FY 2014 followed by the Division of Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI). The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation indicates this is because:

The Executive Director and his staff are often required to travel out of state for purposes related to agency management. Recent examples include extensive travel to obtain guidance re: implementation of the recently received ASPIRE grant and meetings related to the passing of a new Federal Law governing USOR (the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). DSBVI also travels out of state to receive very specialized training and instruction often not available locally related to provision of services to blind and deaf/blind individuals.

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Out of State Travel Per FTE										
Division	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15 Est	16 Est
Executive Director	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,720	\$ 1,069	\$ 944	\$ 738	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,359	\$ 1,844	\$ 1,396	\$ 1,396
Blind and Visually Impaired	\$ 205	\$ 487	\$ 117	\$ 98	\$ 63	\$ 155	\$ 250	\$ 178	\$ 170	\$ 170
Rehabilitation Services	\$ 100	\$ 162	\$ 82	\$ 84	\$ 153	\$ 144	\$ 150	\$ 97	\$ 96	\$ 96
Disability Determination	\$ 141	\$ 251	\$ 197	\$ 128	\$ 102	\$ 20	\$ 14	\$ 102	\$ 84	\$ 84
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	\$ 97	\$ 103	\$ 31	\$ 212	\$ 104	\$ 261	\$ 283	\$ 146	\$ 115	\$ 115

Table 2

The table above shows a general trend for all divisions for the cost per FTE for out of state travel to come down from the two years of FY 2007 and FY 2008 (before the *Great Recession*) and then gradually rise again to levels below what they were before the *Great Recession*. However, the one exception is the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing which has an uneven pattern of out of state travel cost but generally above what it was in FY 2007 and FY 2008. This division indicates this is because:

There are training needs only available through out of state programs specializing in mental health counseling for the deaf. Training is required to enhance skills for a growing number of deaf clients coming to the center with increasing therapeutic needs.

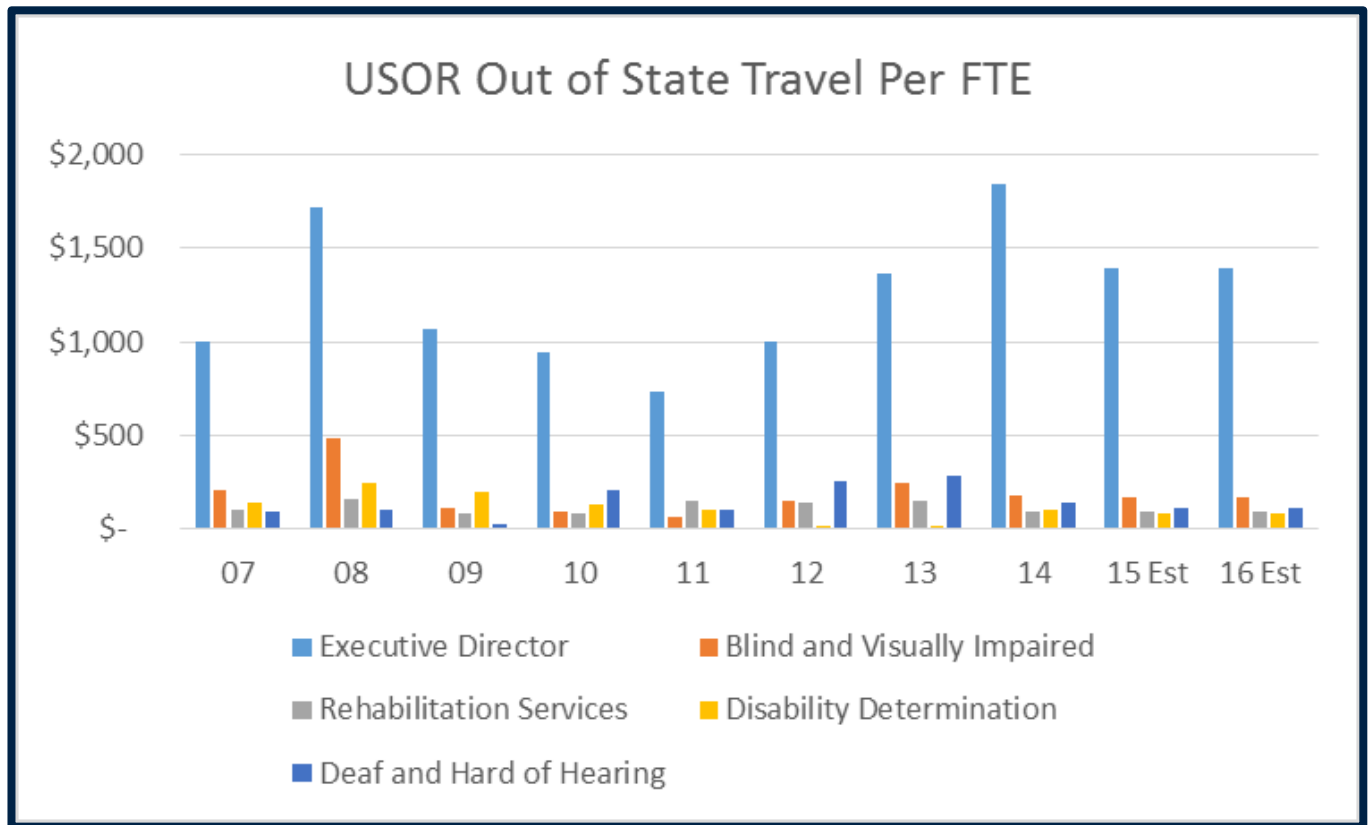


Chart 2

FTEs by Division

The table below lists the FTEs by division that are used in the calculations above. The table shows a gradual growth pattern for FTE over the period covered. The exception to that pattern is the Division of Blind and Visually Impaired.

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation History of FTEs										
Division	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15 Est	16 Est
Executive Director	14.0	15.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	17.0	17.0	21.2	28.0	28.0
Blind and Visually Impaired	59.0	60.0	60.0	54.0	51.0	51.0	56.0	50.6	53.0	53.0
Rehabilitation Services	241.0	238.0	250.0	254.0	254.0	256.0	265.0	265.4	269.0	269.0
Disability Determination	74.0	71.0	71.0	78.0	85.0	81.0	78.0	76.3	93.0	93.0
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	29.0	30.0	29.0	25.0	27.0	28.0	29.0	32.2	41.0	41.0
Total	417.0	414.0	426.0	427.0	433.0	433.0	445.0	445.7	484.0	484.0

Table 3

Total Fund Spent for In State Travel

The table and chart below show total funds spent on in state travel. The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) spent the most on travel in FY 2014 and estimated FY 2015 and FY 2016. DRS makes up 67% of all in-state travel. The agency indicates this is due to the nature of the work performed in DRS:

We work with a population with significant disabilities who are pursuing independence and employment. In many cases, particularly with certain populations, they are not able to get to us so we, when needed,

go to them. Additionally, part of our mandate is to coordinate with schools for students with disabilities and other agencies, and much of the travel within DRS is to perform those duties. Given the need to educate business on hiring people with disabilities DRS also does a lot of outreach to businesses, both in groups and individually, which requires travel.

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation In State Travel										
Division	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15 Est	16 Est
Executive Director	\$ 26,700	\$ 31,800	\$ 23,700	\$ 11,100	\$ 18,500	\$ 19,500	\$ 22,600	\$ 19,200	\$ 19,200	\$ 19,200
Blind and Visually Impaired	\$ 22,700	\$ 21,800	\$ 11,300	\$ 9,600	\$ 8,300	\$ 15,000	\$ 19,600	\$ 13,100	\$ 13,100	\$ 13,100
Rehabilitation Services	\$ 180,500	\$ 197,500	\$ 130,200	\$ 79,200	\$ 119,700	\$ 153,200	\$ 182,200	\$ 143,700	\$ 143,800	\$ 143,800
Disability Determination	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,200	\$ 400	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,300	\$ 1,300	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	\$ 11,500	\$ 19,800	\$ 15,800	\$ 12,400	\$ 13,500	\$ 19,300	\$ 19,700	\$ 36,100	\$ 36,100	\$ 36,100
Total	\$ 242,600	\$ 272,200	\$ 182,200	\$ 112,700	\$ 161,200	\$ 209,300	\$ 245,400	\$ 212,900	\$ 213,000	\$ 213,000

Table 4

Total Fund Spent for Out of State Travel

The table and chart below show the total fund spending on out of state travel. The Executive Director spent the most (45%) on travel in FY 2014 and estimated FY 2015 and FY 2016. The agency states:

This is due to the nature of the job of both the Executive Director and his staff. As indicated earlier, these staff members are often required to travel out of state for purposes related to agency management. Recent examples include extensive travel to obtain guidance re: implementation of the recently received ASPIRE grant and meetings related to the passing of a new Federal Law governing USOR (the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act).

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Out of State Travel										
Division	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15 Est	16 Est
Executive Director	\$ 14,000	\$ 25,800	\$ 17,100	\$ 15,100	\$ 11,800	\$ 17,000	\$ 23,100	\$ 39,100	\$ 39,100	\$ 39,100
Blind and Visually Impaired	\$ 12,100	\$ 29,200	\$ 7,000	\$ 5,300	\$ 3,200	\$ 7,900	\$ 14,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
Rehabilitation Services	\$ 24,000	\$ 38,600	\$ 20,600	\$ 21,400	\$ 38,800	\$ 36,900	\$ 39,800	\$ 25,800	\$ 25,800	\$ 25,800
Disability Determination	\$ 10,400	\$ 17,800	\$ 14,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,700	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,100	\$ 7,800	\$ 7,800	\$ 7,800
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	\$ 2,800	\$ 3,100	\$ 900	\$ 5,300	\$ 2,800	\$ 7,300	\$ 8,200	\$ 4,700	\$ 4,700	\$ 4,700
Total	\$ 63,300	\$ 114,500	\$ 59,600	\$ 57,100	\$ 65,300	\$ 70,700	\$ 86,200	\$ 86,400	\$ 86,400	\$ 86,400

Table 5

APPENDIX – ANSWERS TO COMMITTEE QUESTIONS REGARDING TRAVEL

What benchmark/system do you use to know that what you are spending on travel is reasonable?

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation: “In addition to following all standard State Employee Travel Policies, USOR has a number of additional approval policies to assure that travel reimbursement and expenses are appropriate. For example all overnight travel must be approved in advance at Agency Division Director level, all Out of State travel must be approved in advance at the Agency Executive Director level, and every travel reimbursement is reviewed and approved by at least two supervisor staff members. USOR uses past travel spending as a benchmark as it is difficult to compare USOR to other agencies due to the unique nature of the individuals we serve and the specialized services provided (community based direct service delivery such as deaf outreach, blind outreach and vision screening, Assistive Technology assessment and installation, IEP attendance, psychometric testing and assessment, etc.). Last year USOR implemented multiple cost saving measures and increased monitoring of all spending in order to address a fiscal imbalance. As a result, spending for travel decreased in 2014 and we expect to maintain the same level of spending in 2015.”

What policies do you have to set the budget for travel internally?

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation: “Last year USOR underwent a comprehensive overhaul of all budgeting practices including increasing staff skills related to budgeting and compliance. Using past spending as a guide USOR developed new processes for budgeting, projecting and monitoring. USOR is in the process of evaluating

these new practices and adapting as necessary to increase supervisory responsibility for establishing and monitoring an appropriate travel budget.”

Please explain how any travel cost increases in FY 2015 and FY 2016 projections will be sustainable.

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation: “USOR is projecting that travel costs will remain stable in 2015 and 2016.”

Did your travel costs go down during FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011 because there were less conferences being offered? If yes, could you provide some examples of which larger conferences were canceled please?

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation: “No, USOR does not believe any decrease in costs was related to less conferences being offered.”

Are the number of conferences offered cyclical based on new best practices?

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation: “In addition to conferences that occur every year USOR does sometimes see conferences offered in a cyclical manner. Usually such conferences are related to the passing of new law such as the recently passed Rehabilitation Act within the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) or new regulations or changes to state agency requirements by our Federal partners rather than the introduction of a new best practice.”